1744

Proceedings of the Madras Government, Revenue Department, 5th October 1871.

Read the following papers :—

No. 56. From the Commissioner of the Nilgiris, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, Fort St. George, dated Ootacamund, 25th February 1871, No. 16.

G. O., 22nd [illegible] 1871, [illegible] me to place certain orders on the unanswered file for the half-year ending 31st December 1870, namely :—

Order, 30th March 1870, No. 411, paragraphs 5 and 6.

Order, 19th December 1870, No. 2,072.

The last-named order was replied to on the 25th January I now reply to the first order.

2. I. " Desiring to be furnished with any suggestions for adopting measures " calculated to improve the agricultural stock of the Nilgiris, and for assisting " in procuring a superior description of plant for stocking the tea plantations".

The first part of the order respecting agricultural stock was replied to in my letter to the Board of the 6th November 1869, No. 58, in answer to Proceedings of the Board No. 745 of the 3rd February 1869. I now forward copy of that letter and its enclosures.

3. With respect to tea-planting I have been for some time in correspondence and consultation with most of the Nilgiri tea-growers, with a view to place before Government a definite proposal for the encouragement of tea-cultivation up here. From the tenor of the various replies I have received, I have somewhat changed my opinion as to the way in which Government aid had best be given. I find that the tea-planters are nearly unanimous in thinking that it is not so much seed of a superior description of tea-plant that is wanted here as the knowledge of some economical, manageable, and effective mode of manufacture. By this time, after repeated failures, the varieties of China hybrid and indigenous tea-plants have been imported, and are established on the Nilgiri plantations; and some of the proprietors are prepared to supply as much tea-seed as is likely to be wanted for some time to come, and object, not perhaps without reason, to Government interference with their market.

4. Great difference of opinion prevails (as was to be expected) among those interested in tea-growing on the Nilgiris as to the way in which Government might render aid. On the whole, however, the suggestions offered may be reduced to four :—

I.—That there should be free tenure of the land for a certain number of years.

II.—That Government should introduce the best mode of manufacture by the importation of Chinese or Assam exports, or by accrediting some qualified European to the tea districts of Northern India, in order that he may make himself master of the most approved methods of manufacture there, and instruct us here.

III.—That the Commissariat should be directed to call for tenders, and purchase Indian teas instead of China as hitherto.

IV.—That a quantity of China hybrid and indigenous Assam tea-seed should be imported by Government and planted out in separate patches at a distance from each other, so as to prevent hybridization and enable growers to get seeds *true* to their kind, which is not always the case with the seeds purchased from private gardens.

5. The planters had the satisfaction of an interview here last year with His Excellency the Governor and the Members of Council on the subject of the first suggestion. I have written all I have to say on the same subject in my letter* to the Board, which are, I believe, still before Government, and on which final orders have not yet been received. I will only add that if the principle of free-tenure for a time is one that can be recognized at all any where, tea-planters on the Nilgiris have special claim to the indulgence.

* 26th October 1869, No. 149, Board's Proceedings No. 1,861 of 18th March 1870. 7th May 1870, No. 69, in Board's Proceedings No. 5,611 of 6th September 1870.

6. In Assam, Cachar, Chittagong, and in Darjeeling and other hill districts of Bengal, climates congenial to the tea-plant are found, and the growth and manufacture of tea are thoroughly established there. But in Southern India tea-cultivation is of recent date; and although the plant will live and grow almost anywhere, soil, climate, elevation, labour, manufacture, and communications have all more or less to say to the success or failure of a plantation as an investment. On the Nilgiris the effect of all these is not yet known. A planter, who, as a pioneer, employs his capital in the formation of a tea estate in the south of India, incurs risks beyond those of ordinary agriculture, or even of coffee-planting, and may therefore fairly ask Government to forego the rent of the land until he has had time to ascertain whether or no his tea will yield him a profit.

7. As regards the second suggestion one thing is pretty certain that hill-teas excel in flavour; but the hill-plant yields less leaf, and the leaf, weight for weight, wants the strength of Assam and other teas grown at lower elevations. On this account manufacture is all important on hill estates. Given a suitable soil, climate, and elevation, the tea-plant here will produce *flushes* of leaf in considerable quantity, and so far the Nilgiri planter, who has some knowledge of tea-growing, can see his way. But then comes manufacture on which profit and loss mainly depend.

8. It will be within the recollection of Government that four tea manipulators were engaged for two years, brought down from the North-West Provinces, and placed in February 1863 upon the Nilgiri plantations of Messrs. Mann and Rae. Mr. Collector Grant† was under the impression that "considerable "benefit resulted from the instruction "of the tea manipulators." I am, however, rather disposed to think from what I can learn that the benefit was not great. Mr. Ouchterlony, who was managing Mr. Mann's estate at the time, wrote‡ on the 15th November 1864 that their (the tea manipulators) conduct had been good; "but beyond showing the

† Letter, 2nd March 1866, No. 19, in Proceedings of Government, Revenue Department, 10th March 1866, No. 162.

‡ Proceedings of Government, 20th December 1864, No. 212.

"detail of manipulating and use of the various utensils, they cannot give instruc-
"tion on the general work, * * * and the result of their own work in
"preparing tea was an article inferior to what the Overseer and his own men
"prepared."

Mr. Rae wrote,* "They will introduce a new era in the manufacture of tea
"into the Deyrah Doon and North
"West. The tea they first made for
"me has cost me more than they here
"cost the Government."

* Proceedings of Government, Revenue Department, 30th January 1865, No. 314.

If Government admitted the necessity of doing something more towards helping on *manufacture* here, I should not advise a fresh importation of native manipulators.

9. There are scarcely two estates here on which the mode of manufacture is the same. But an intelligent man, by attentive inquiry on the spot in old tea districts, would surely be able to determine which is the best plan, and afterwards instruct others in the process. An expenditure by Government of 3,000 or 4,000 Rs. in the employment of such a man for a few months might, I think, set the point at rest once for all; and it would be in this direction, if any, that I should like to see the Government take action rather than import more native manipulators.

10. Year by year tea-cultivation in India is assuming proportions which would justify the expenditure of a few hundred pounds to aid, if it be found really necessary, in developing an industry which promises to be of great national importance. When tea-planting in the north first attracted notice, experimental estates were opened by the Government of India at great expense, and seeds and seedlings were given *gratis* to the public. The result is that several districts in the north are now studded with tea estates worked by private individuals. There is every probability that tea-growing on the Nilgiris can be made to pay, when worked under proper conditions of locality and management, if the difficulty of manufacture can be satisfactorily solved.

11. The Agricultural and Horticultural Society of India have offered a medal and 500 Rs. for the best Essay on tea-cultivation. The Essays are to be in Calcutta by the 1st proximo. One I know has gone up from this district. It would be well to await the result, and see if the Prize Essay affords such information on *manufacture* as to obviate the necessity of Government moving in the matter.

12. The third suggestion that the Commissariat should be called upon to purchase Indian teas is one that I cannot support. Such an artless mode of protection might find many advocates in America, but infant industries with us must be content with less easily discovered props.

The attention of the Commissariat officers might be drawn to Indian teas; but, in the interests of economy, they must be left to purchase the best tea they can find at the lowest figure.

13. Before commenting on the fourth suggestion I should like to await Mr. McIvor's return from Bengal, in order that I may with him go over the small Government tea estate here, to see its condition, and note what varieties of tea-plants we have.

14. In conclusion I venture to point out the importance of encouraging tea-planting to the utmost, with a view to the development of the resources of this and other hill-plateaus. Native hill-cultivation is unimportant. The great staples of the low country cannot be raised here on account of the climate. Distance from markets and cost of transport tell heavily on agricultural industries which raise [illegible] at lower elevations. Anchovy produce is a medicine, and horse article of food, its cultivation will too soon find a limit. The increased expense of living in India and the greater facilities of communication with Europe make the advent of more settlers more and more improbable. Tea, therefore, growing as it does in climates attractive to Europeans seems to me to afford the best hope of inducing any number of them to people our hill-plateaus.

No. 57. From the Commissioner of the Nilgiris, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Ootacamund, 11th September 1871, No. 67.

Your official memorandum dated 1st September 1871, No. 167.

2. I have the honour to forward Mr. Brace's Essay on tea-culture for the perusal of Government.

3. Mr. Brace informs me that the Secretary of the Agri-Horticultural Society of India has written to him to say that it has not yet been decided to whom the prize of 500 Rs. is to be awarded.

No. 58. From the Commissioner of the Nilgiris, to the Secretary to Government, Revenue Department, dated Ootacamund, 20th September 1871, No. 70.

Your official memorandum No. 167, 1st September 1871.

In my letter of the 25th February 1871 I said I would await Mr. McIvor's return from Bengal before reporting on the desirability of Government importing further China hybrid and indigenous Assam tea-seed, and forming separate plantations of each at a distance from one another to prevent hybridization.

2. I have since then been over the Government Tea Garden behind Dodabett two or three times, and went again on the 12th instant with Mr. McIvor, from whom I learn that we have 4,750 seven-year old tea-plants and 2,500 young plants. Of the old plants about half are Assam and quarter the hybrid variety. The plants in the garden looked strong and healthy, and would furnish an immense number of cuttings if there was a demand for them. Mr. McIvor was of opinion that propagation by cuttings would prove more satisfactory than by importation of seed. Under these circumstances might be put down a few thousand cuttings of each variety of tea-plant for distribution to planters *gratis*, or at some nominal price. This, I think, would meet present needs. Hereafter, when there are signs of tea paying and land is being taken up actively for tea-cultivation, Government might consider the question of adding in the importation of seeds of the various varieties.

3. In June last I received an offer from Captain Jennings to lease the Government Tea Garden for 150 Rs. per annum. Subsequently, in August, he modified his offer to the purchase of the leaf, and I have accordingly desired

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Mr. McIvor to arrange with him the price per pound, and to keep an account of the quantity of leaf picked and sold that we may know how much an acre of a certain age plants will produce.

Miscellaneous.

The Government have recently sanctioned certain terms of preliminary free tenure of land taken up for planting, etc., purposes on the hills, and have directed the Superintendent of Government Farms to visit the hills and report on their agricultural capabilities and prospects. The above papers will now be communicated to Mr. Robertson for consideration in connection with his mission, and the Government will await his report before taking any further action on the general subject.

2. As regards the special question of tea manufacture, the Government agree with the Commissioner in deeming it advisable to await the publication of the Prize Essay on the subject before adopting any measures in view to the improvement of the manufacture on these hills. The reports received from Europe on the samples that were sent Home for opinion indicate that the art is not all unknown to some at least of the local growers; and it admits of question whether the delegation of any individual to the principal places of manufacture in the Northern Provinces would result in any wide extension of knowledge of the most approved processes here. The subject will, however, be reserved for future consideration.

3. As regards the creation of a local market by means of the Commissariat, the Government observe that the partial use of Indian teas for the troops has been already introduced, and that it is open to the Nilgiri planters to tender for the supply in common with others. The Government are, of course, precluded from offering any special advantages in the matter to local manufacturers.

4. The proposals made in regard to the Government Tea plantation are approved. The stock of plants from cuttings will be formed for sale to applicants on such terms as to price and quantity as the Commissioner may approve.

(True Extract.)

(Signed) W. HUDLESTON,
Secretary to Government.

To the Commissioner of the Nilgiris.
,, Mr. W. R. Robertson, Superintendent, Government Experimental Farm.
,, the Board of Revenue.
,, the Military Department.

Exd. F. R. Bantleman.

Revenue Department

4B

Memo for Orders on No. 668.

On the 30th March 187

Government reviewed Mr. Brooks's

Report on the Ootacamund

Exhibition of 1869, and in the

course of the Orders called on

him to make suggestions regard-

ing measures (1) for improving the

agricultural stock of the

Neilgherries, and (2) for giving

assistance to the Neilgherry tea

plantations. Mr. Brooks

replies. On the former point

he forwards copy of his letter 4B

to the Board dated 6th Nov.

1869. As the papers on this

Subject

Subject are already in Circulation and as a printed copy of Mr. Brett's letter is among them, the Copy now forwarded appears to be identical with that which I have no Notice. Paras 3 to 14 of Pt. I, at head contain= ing Mr. Brett's report on the second point - the encourage= ment of tea plantations - are submitted for separate consideration and orders.

C.R.

The means of encouragement suggested are.

1. Exemption from Land Tax of Land for planting.
This subject is now under the Govt.

2. Govt. aid to improve manufacture.

Mr. Brett suggests the expediency of an intelligent person to enquire into the practice in the other Tea factories in Northern India

[illegible]

Land Tax await the publication of the Report on the subject from the Agricultural Society of India Have offered a Prize for the Encouraging the cultivation of Tea.

3. That the Commissariat shall supply the Army with Indian instead of China Teas.

The remarks in the 3rd. Pt. of the proportion of each Sort is to be published

4. That Govt. shall establish Tea plantations distinct kind of Tea - China - Assam - and Hybrid - as soon as profitable for private Sale -

Before giving any opinion on this head I would have Mr. Brett's Report examined with care by the existing Govt. Tea Gardens -

C.R.

25 Mar. 71.

Arms

Encouragement of
tea Plantations

C. Nos 668, 2958 & 2978 - No 1744

5th October 91.

6B

Lieut Colonel
Kilgour
2 Sept 26.
11
30.

The Govt Lieutenant
sanctioned certain
terms of purchase
for certain Plants
taken up for planting
& for purposes of
Silk - and Lieut
Directed the Dept of
Govt Farms & Gardens
& Parks & Superintendent
their agricultural
Capabilities and
prospects. Reports
further Lieut are to be
communicated
to Mr. Robertson

Provincial Legislature in connection with the question and the Govt. will await its report before taking any further action with the general subject

As regards the special question of the manufactures the Govt. agrees with the Comm.rs in deeming it advisable that the publication of the Digest Essay on the subject be postponed before adopting any measures in view to the improvement of the manufacture in question. The report received from Prussia

on the completion of the Digest Essay on the subject with a view to the adoption of the delegation of individual to the principal places of manufacture in the Dominions would result in any Digest Essay of the processes of manufacture. The subject will however be considered for further consideration.

As regards the creation of a local market by means of the Commissariats

K. Gov.r observe that the
Garrisons of Indian
Corn for the Troops be
timely bring introduced
and Natives put
the Virginia Islanders
& Lands for the Supply
to commence K. Stores.

That an Exemption
purchased from Spring
any Special advantages
in the Matter Local
Manufactures

The Proposals made
in Regard to the Gov.r Da
plantation assessed.

The Stock of Plants from
Cuttings with to formed
& Slips & applicants
for which Lands are
to be cleared Each
five Years Exempt by
as the Comm.rs
assess.

3 To the Commissioners Nelgewick 1804
1 Hon.ble Col. Robertson Supt Bot Depart
14 The Officers of Regt
7 The Subalterns Do

№ 5-8-59